
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Landmark/District:	Cleveland Park Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	3700 Connecticut Avenue NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	January 26, 2017	<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	17-216	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Steve Callcott	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Murillo/Malnati Group LLC, with drawings prepared by Dynerman Architects, seeks concept review for demolition of a two-story frame house and construction of a three-story brick house in the Cleveland Park Historic District.

Property Description

The existing house at 3700 Connecticut Avenue was constructed in 1920 as one of three bungalow style houses designed by J.A. Moore for owner Catherine McCarron along Rodman Street. The property has been altered considerably over time, and in November 2006 (HPA 06-377) the Board determined the house to be non-contributing due to significant alterations of the building's structure and the loss of numerous original and character defining features. As detailed in the November 2006 HPO report, the original side gable roof was removed during the 1960s and replaced with the current double-roof. The entrance was originally located on Rodman Street and included a full length porch with a stone base and wood columns; the porch has been enclosed and a new entrance and stoop added to the Connecticut Avenue elevation. Most of the original windows have been altered and the original wood clapboards have been covered with aluminum siding.

In exchange for the conveyance of a small piece of land at the rear of site, the National Park Service holds an easement on the property that limits any new construction to a single-family home of the same general footprint as the existing house and with a maximum height of 40 feet.

Proposal

The proposal calls for demolishing the existing house and constructing a new three-story single-family brick house that would occupy the same general footprint as the existing. The proposed building is broken up into three volumes. The two main volumes are three stories in height and separated by a glass hyphen that would contain the recessed central front entry. The third volume at the rear would be two stories. The first floor would be raised approximately 5 feet above a basement level. Fenestration building would consist of elongated window openings that graduate in size with the largest of the openings on the first floor. The third floor would be treated as an attic with a higher proportion of glazing separated by brick piers. The building would be capped by a copper cornice.

Evaluation

The reasons and rationale for determining the property to be non-contributing to the historic district remain unchanged. The house has been extensively altered, resulting in a significant loss of integrity to its massing, roofline, and architectural character. It is recommended that the Board reaffirm its finding that the property no longer contributes to the character of the Cleveland Park Historic District.

The concept for new construction is compatible with the historic district in terms of scale, height, massing, design and materials. The design attempts to strike a balance between two contexts: the multi-story masonry apartment buildings on Connecticut Avenue and the adjacent smaller-scaled frame houses on Rodman Street. While the elevation drawings give the building a flat, rowhouse quality that is not particularly characteristic of the historic district, the perspective renderings convey a residential scale and three-dimensional quality that makes a more compelling case for its compatibility. As shown in those renderings, the three separate volumes are successful in breaking down the mass of the building into smaller, residential components. Although the house is taller than the adjacent bungalows on Rodman Street, it does not result in an incompatibility of heights; the relationship is similar to others found in the historic district where smaller residential buildings abut larger buildings on Connecticut and Wisconsin avenues. The material use and pattern of fenestration are referential to the neighboring apartment buildings without being replicative. The bluestone banding, the variation in window sizes, and the use of a contrasting brick for the building's base provide visual interest and character and, along with the three separate volumes, helps break down the massing.

As the project continues to be refined and developed, the applicant should consider converting at least the first two brick panels on the third floor of the west elevation into windows rather than brick panels. This portion of the elevation will be quite visible when coming down Rodman Street where an entirely windowless third floor wall would appear out of character with the detached nature of the building. Detailing of the cornice and brickwork should also continue to be developed in consultation with HPO.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board:

- *reaffirm its finding that the existing building on the site is non-contributing due to a loss of integrity;*
- *find the concept for new construction to be compatible with the historic district;*
- *and delegate final approval to staff with the condition the applicant work with HPO on finalizing the details and the selection of materials, including the brick, windows, doors, and cornice.*